WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1   1.   A method for performing an electronic transaction, comprising:

2   (a)   receiving a long-term certificate;

3   (b)   authenticating a user associated with the long-term certificate;

4   (c)   sending a short-term certificate to the user authenticated in (b).

1   2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   (d)   evaluating a risk associated with the user; and

3   (e)   including in the short-term certificate information about the risk

4   associated with the user.

1   3.   The method of claim 2, wherein the risk associated with the user is reflected in

2   an upper limit on the short-term certificate's value.

1   4.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   (d)   receiving information about the user's spending history; and

3   (e)   including in the short-term certificate information based on the user's

4   spending history.

1   5.   The method of claim 4, wherein the information about a user's spending history

2   includes marketing offers.

1   6.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   (d)   receiving from a market partner information about the market partner's

3   needs; and

4   (e)   including in the short-term certificate information about the market

5   partner's needs.

1   7.   The method of claim 6, wherein the information about a market partner's needs

2   includes marketing offers.

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1   8.   The method of claim 2, further comprising:

2   (f)   receiving, information about the user's spending habits; and

3   (g)   including in the short-term certificate information about the user's

4   spending habits.

1   9.   The method of claim 2, further comprising:

2   (f)   receiving from a market partner information about the market partner's

3   needs; and

4   (g)   including in the short-term certificate information about the market

5   partner's needs.

1   10.   The method of claim 4, further comprising:

2   (f)   receiving from a market partner information about the market partner's

3   needs; and

4   (g)   including in the short-term certificate information about the market

5   partner's needs.

1   11.   The method of claim 8, further comprising:

2   (h)   receiving from a market partner information about the market partner's

3   needs; and

4   (i)   including in the short-term certificate information about the market

5   partner's needs.

1   12.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   (d)   billing the user through a regular billing channel between the certifier

3   and the user.

1   13.   The method of claim 12, wherein the regular billing channel is a telephone bill.

1   14.   The method of claim 12, wherein the regular billing channel is a credit-card bill.

1   15.   The method of claim 8, further comprising:

2   (h)   billing the user through a regular billing channel between the certifier

3   and the user.

1   16.   The method of claim 11, further comprising:

2   (j)   billing the user through a regular billing channel between the certifier

3   and the user.

1   17.   An apparatus for practicing commerce on a network, comprising:

2   (a)   a processor;

3   (b)   a port coupled to said processor; and

4   (c)   a memory, also coupled to said processor, storing instructions adapted

5   to be executed by said processor to

6   (i)   receive a long-term certificate;

7   (ii)   authenticate a user associated with the long-term certificate; and

8   (iii)   send short-term certificates to the user authenticated in (ii).

1   18.   The apparatus of claim 17, further comprising:

2   (d)   a memory storing instructions adapted to be executed by said processor

3   to

4   (i)   evaluate the risk associated with the user; and

5   (ii)   include in the short-term certificate information about the risk

6   associated with the user.

1   19.   The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the risk associated with the user is reflected

2   in an upper limit on a value of the short-term certificate.

1   20.   The apparatus of claim 17, further comprising:

2   (d)   a memory storing instructions adapted to be executed by said processor

3   to

4   (i)   receive information about the user's spending history; and

5   (ii)   include in the short-term certificate information based on the

6   user's spending history.

1   21.   The apparatus in claim 20, wherein the information about the user's spending

2   habits includes marketing offers.

1   22.   The apparatus of claim 17, further comprising:

2   (d)   a memory storing instructions adapted to be executed by said processor

3   to

4   (i)   receive from a market partner information about the market

5   partner's needs; and

6   (ii)   include in the short-term certificate information about the

7   market partner's needs.

1   23.   The apparatus of claim 22, wherein the information about the market partner's

2   needs includes marketing offers.

1   24.   The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising:

2   (e)   a memory storing instructions adapted to be executed by said processor

3   to

4   (i)   receive information about the user's spending habits; and

5   (ii)   include in the short-term certificate information about the user's

6   spending habits.

1   25.   The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising:

2   (e)   a memory storing instructions adapted to be executed by said processor

3   to

4   (i)   receive from a market partner information about the market

5   partner's needs; and

6   (ii)   include in the short-term certificate information about the

7   market partner's needs.

1   26.   The apparatus of claim 20, further comprising:

2   (e)   a memory storing instructions adapted to be executed by said processor

3   to

4   (i)   receive from a market partner information about the market

5   partner's needs; and

6   (ii)   include in the short-term certificate information about the

7   market partner's needs.

1   27.   The apparatus of claim 24, further comprising:

2   (e)   a memory storing instructions adapted to be executed by said processor

3   to

4   (i)   receive from a market partner information about the market

5   partner's needs; and

6   (ii)   include in the short-term certificate information about the

7   market partner's needs.

1   28.   A computer-readable medium that stores instructions adapted to be executed by

2   a processor to perform the steps of:

3   (a)   receiving a long-term certificate;

4   (b)   authenticating a user associated with the long-term certificate;

5   (c)   sending a short-term certificate to the user authenticated in (b).

1   29.   The computer-readable medium of claim 28, further comprising

2   (d)   evaluating the risk associated with the user; and

3   (e)   including in the short-term certificate information about the risk

4   associated with the user.

1   30.   The computer-readable medium of claim 28, further comprising:

2   (d)   receiving information about the user's spending history; and

3   (e)   including in the short-term certificate information about the user's

4   spending history.

1   31.   The computer-readable medium of claim 28, further comprising:

2   (d)   receiving from a market partner information about the market partner's

3   needs'

4   (e)   including in the short-term certificate information about the market

5   partner's needs.